

Bring Back The Moratorium

I recognize that most local organizing groups have already picked a day for their major rally, demonstration or vigil for the period October 21-24, and that most will have chosen Saturday or Sunday, October 22 or 23. Nevertheless, because of political urgency and the need for an action that is a degree stronger than the demonstrations of the recent past, I urge consideration by national and local organizations of the merits of choosing a single working day, Friday, October 21, as the occasion for as many of the rallies and demonstrations as possible across the country. The effect could be a national work-stoppage, a tacit, limited, general strike.

This would be modeled on the National Moratorium Day of October 15, 1969, which was successful beyond all expectations at the time, both in the range of participation and in its actual political impact (though this was effectively concealed by Richard Nixon for years: see Nixon's and H.R. Haldeman's memoirs and Seymour Hersh's account in *The Price of Power*).

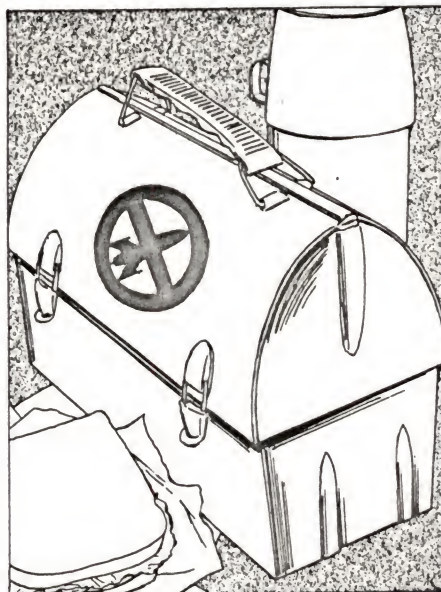
For a Moratorium Day to be held on October 21 many groups would have to schedule new events or re-schedule events already planned. I would not be making such a dreadful suggestion at this late date if these were not desperate times. If too little time remains for organizing a successful Moratorium Day for October 21 it is, nevertheless, a concept that should be strongly considered in the weeks that follow.

FOCUS FOR THE MORATORIUM DAY

To guarantee wide participation, and, all the more, to motivate the work-day stoppage, a focus broader than stopping the deployment of Pershing 2 and cruise missiles is essential in the United States this fall (just as rallies in Europe, if focused only on MX or the freeze, would fizzle).

I propose particular emphasis on a demand that the President, or, if necessary, Congress, pursue an immediate, mutual U.S.-Soviet suspension of the underground testing of nuclear warheads and the flight-testing of new ballistic missiles. This would apply not only to new ICBMs, such as the MX and the Soviet SSX-24; but to new medium- and intermediate-range missiles such as the Pershing 2 and the Soviet SS-21, 22 and

23, as well as to submarine-launched ballistic missiles on both sides. In brief: we ask the President or Congress to seek an "immediate mutual halt to the testing of warheads and missiles." An end of testing would effectively halt the major part of the arms race.



It is widely recognized that the testing of warheads and of ballistic missiles can now be adequately verified by each side by *existing* means of surveillance alone. Thus no further time-consuming negotiations over new means of verification are required in order for each side to assure itself that the other is not testing.

New means of verification, perhaps cooperative ones, are probably necessary to monitor a fully comprehensive, permanent, mutual freeze, which would include testing of cruise missiles and *production* and deployment of all nuclear materials, warheads and vehicles; and likewise, to monitor reductions in stockpiles. But these new means of verification, pointing to a full freeze, can best be negotiated in the context of a mutual halt *now* to all the activities that can already be adequately monitored.

We should be demanding that the President try right now to end the major part of the arms race, verifiably, in the time of a phone call to President Andropov, conveying: "We won't test any more warheads or new ballistic missiles unless you do." If Reagan refuses (as is likely) even to attempt this "phone-call freeze," then Congress must be asked to confront

the Soviets with this challenge and opportunity.

Congress can, in fact, do this, by "fencing" testing funds—making the authorization or appropriation of funds for testing warheads or ballistic missiles after a certain date *contingent* on Soviet testing after that date. (To spend any money on U.S. testing, the President would have to convince Congress, with evidence, that the Soviets were still testing.) We should hold congressional representatives accountable in the coming elections if they fail to use their constitutional power in this way.

Although this approach is more feasible in the spring, during the authorization phase of the budget process, it is not too soon to put the notion of congressional budgetary power—and responsibility—into the minds of voters and Congress. (The Vietnam War was ended only by public pressure on Congress to cut off the funds for the bombing.)

If crucial events in the next 18 months are to be influenced by our movement, it must be by public pressure on Congress to restrict the budget. Similar pressure on Congress will still be needed under a new President, if we get one. But we can't wait until then. And that's where Moratorium Day comes in.

WHY WORK-DAY RALLIES?

As demonstrated in 1969, when one to two million Americans took part in the first Moratorium, a work-stoppage, however limited, has a number of merits. It gives people the sense that they are doing something more committed and impressive than attending a rally on their day off. It lets them announce their position to their bosses and co-workers and provides the opportunity to encourage their colleagues to join. It may well result (as in 1969) in many businesses and schools giving time off, swelling the ranks and adding strongly to the expression of popular support. (If rallies start at noon, many people can just devote their lunch hour, while others take off the whole afternoon or day.)

The experience in 1969 indicates that these effects, combined with the national character of the event, strongly outweigh in impressiveness the fact that some people (who might turn out on a Saturday or a Sunday) will not take time off from work. And those who cannot

come can wear an arm band at work or school, promoting further discussion.

If a work-stoppage is to be visible, people who do take time off must gather at a rally. They may well be encouraged to hold a vigil part of the day, attend neighborhood meetings, visit congressional offices, and so forth. They must *also* be encouraged to come to a central rally—in effect, to be counted.

IT WORKED IN '69!

Although very few outside the White House knew it at the time (or even today), the October 15, 1969, demonstrations aborted the Nixon administration's plans for an escalation of the war in Vietnam just two weeks later.

Starting in August 1969, Nixon had repeatedly warned the North Vietnamese, through Henry Kissinger and in secrecy from the American public, that they would be attacked more heavily than ever before—"A savage blow," Kissinger instructed his planners—if they did not accept the terms amounting to their defeat by November 1, 1969. *The threat included the possible use of nuclear weapons* against targets in North Vietnam (revealed by Haldeman's memoirs, and by Roger Morris, Kissinger's assistant, who reviewed planning folders, including photographs, for the specific nuclear targets selected, one of which was a mile and a half from the Chinese border).

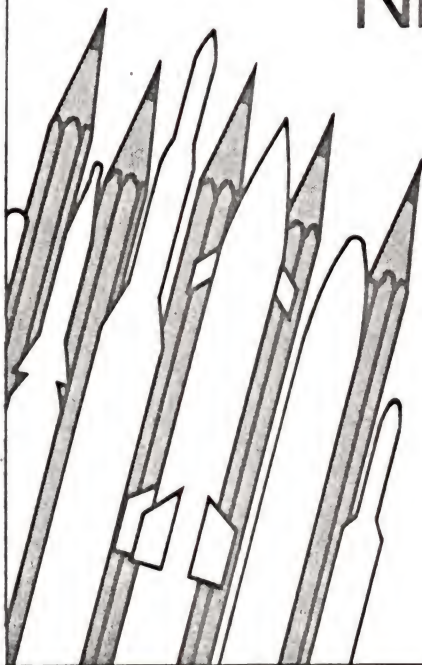
Hanoi did not accept the terms dictated, then or later. Nixon gives one and only one reason in his memoirs why he did not then carry out what he calls "my November ultimatum." There were too many Americans in the streets and squares taking off from work and school to protest the war on October 15. "I knew," Nixon says, "that after all the protests and the Moratorium, American public opinion would be seriously divided by any military escalation of the war."

Many students today still remember wearing a black arm band or marching with their parents or older friends that fall of 1969, when they were seven years old or so. They were doing the same job their parents were doing on that occasion: being counted by the President, in opposition to his secret threats and plans. By departing from school or business-as-usual, children as well as adults were compelling him to maintain the existing moratorium, since Nagasaki, on the use of nuclear weapons against humans. They were buying time for humanity—another 14 years so far. We can thank them for what they did that day by doing it again. □

Daniel Ellsberg recently became a member of the national freeze campaign's Strategy Task Force.

NOW AVAILABLE:
proceedings of the conference on

WAR, PEACE & THE NEWS MEDIA



This ground-breaking conference on how the news media cover the nuclear arms race and U.S.-Soviet tensions was held March 18 and 19, 1983 at New York University's Department of Journalism, with support from the Gannett Foundation. A transcript of the proceedings (app. 250 pages) is now available, including keynote speeches, position papers, and remarks of the discussants and audience. Participants include Hodding Carter, Sidney Drell, Ralph Earle, James Fallows, Anne Garrels, Stephen Hess, Robert MacNeil, Judith Miller, Richard Pollak, Thomas Powers, and others.

For a copy of the transcript, send a check for \$15 made out to New York University to: War, Peace & the News Media, Department of Journalism, NYU, 1021 Main, NY, NY 10003.

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THE NEW ARMS RACE ?

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